



St. Louis Audubon Society



Tale Feathers

VOLUME 64, NUMBER 3

JUNE 1997

Tracy Memorial Targeted for Migratory Bird Display at Zoo

by Mary Lou Miller

As many of you may recall, this past year \$2,000 in donations as memorials for Robert Tracy, Jr. was received by the St. Louis Audubon Society. This money had been earmarked for a special project as soon as such a project was approved by the board of directors. A project in conjunction with the St. Louis Zoo has now been approved, and the board has also pledged an additional \$2,000 to match the donation amount, bringing the total to \$4,000. The additional funds were not budgeted for fiscal year 1997-98 since we didn't know exactly when the project would be completed. Consequently, we are hoping this additional \$2,000 will come from other charitable contributions.

In April I met with 2 St. Louis Zoo staff members: Michael Macek, curator of birds, and Louise Bradshaw, associate curator of education/programs and past board member of St. Louis Audubon. I took with me all the materials we have on file for neotropical migratory birds for the past few years from the National Audubon Society's campaign "Birds in the Balance" and the Partners in Flight material collected for International Migratory Bird Day. As it turned out, Michael had recently been to national meetings regarding these migratory birds. Louise was well acquainted with these programs because of our work with the Zoo on International Migratory Bird Day.

I suggested as a project some type of display

explaining to the public our concerns about these migratory birds and their travels through and to our area. We discussed what kind of display we would like and talked about the price. I was fairly certain that Audubon's board would be enthusiastic about such a display that would be seen by thousands of people at the St. Louis Zoo. Mike, Louise, and I are continuing to meet to develop a proposal to submit to the Zoo board. The project will probably cost much more than \$4,000, but we think we can raise the additional money from corporations in our area.

This will be the first time the St. Louis Zoo has focused on native birds of Missouri. Some other zoos in the U.S. are now including native birds in their programs.

If anyone would like to make a contribution toward this project, please earmark your check to the St. Louis Audubon Society as such. It may be possible that this \$2,000 extra from our chapter can be raised before the project is completed. I am very excited about this project. It gives us a chance once again to work with the St. Louis Zoo. It also gives Audubon a terrific way to tell the public about neotropical migratory birds they can find right across the street from the Zoo in Kennedy Woods or in their own backyards. This type of educational project is exactly what the St. Louis Audubon Society is all about--birds and their habitats!

Thank you for any contributions toward this project, which may be sent to:

Mary Lou Miller
3927 Lucas & Hunt Road
St. Louis, MO 63121

If you want additional information, please call me at 389-3969 (evenings).

Annual Dinner Includes Awards and Big Muddy Talk

by Jim Holsen

St. Louis Audubon held its annual dinner on Friday, April 18, at the Viking Conference Center in Sunset Hills. The busy evening included a delicious dinner, a brief business meeting, award presentations to Lewis C. Green and Marshall Magner, and a lively presentation on the Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge by J. C. Bryant.

Lewis C. Green received St. Louis Audubon's Conservationist of the Year award. Lewis, a leading environmental attorney, was 1 of the founders of the Missouri Coalition for the Environment in 1969 and is the only 1 of the original founders to remain on its board of directors. Over the years, his legal efforts on behalf of the Coalition have put teeth into its statements and have made it a respected voice for conservation and the environment.

Among Lewis Green's most recent achievements was a decision from the Missouri Supreme Court restricting the authority of the Missouri legislature to amend regulations issued by state agencies. He was also successful in litigation over the authority of the Department of Conservation to lease wetlands near Earth City to a casino operation. All too often, Lewis' name is omitted from newspaper accounts of these and other cases.

Marshall Magner, a longtime member of the St. Louis Audubon Society, received the Dr. Robert J. Terry award. The Terry award, named for 1 of the founders of the old St. Louis Bird Club, is given for lifetime achievement in fostering conservation. Marshall, a retired entomologist who worked for many years with Monsanto, remains active with many area organizations, including the Webster Groves Nature Study Society, the Missouri Botanical Garden, and the Webster Groves and Missouri Historical Societies. He is known for his work with children.

Continued on page 2

In This Issue

Annual Dinner Awards	page 1
Audubon's 1997- 98 Budget	page 2
Last Chance for Kenya Safari	page 3

Letter Writing Opportunity	page 4
Spring Birding Trips	page 5
Humboldt Penguins	page 7



From Your President

by Jim Holsen

1997-98 Audubon Budget Approved

At its May meeting, the board of directors approved the fiscal year 1997-98 budget for St. Louis Audubon. Our estimated income is \$39,290. Actual expenses are estimated to be slightly less, permitting us to return \$700 to our savings account.

Our principal source of income is a rebate on membership dues which we receive from the National Audubon Society. But nearly as important is the return on investments made with funds received from the sale of property on Lewis Road in St. Louis County a few years ago. Last year we received slightly more than \$2,000 from African tours organized by Paul Bauer; we expect to receive at least the same amount this year.

The Society plans to organize a tour to the Platte River in the spring of 1998 during the migration of the sandhill cranes, and that is expected to bring in additional income. The bird seed and other sales contribute a substantial amount to our income. Also this year, we expect to receive a fairly considerable amount from the Missouri Environmental Fund. We are anticipating a grant or equivalent gift of computer hardware to bring our computer facilities up to the standards that we will need to support our educational and conservation programs.

Our principal expenses are for office rent, telephone, etc. and for the printing and mailing of our newsletter. Our dues to the Missouri Audubon Council support the various activities of the Council, which represents all 14 Audubon Societies in the state.

St. Louis Audubon provides scholarships to 3 area teachers to attend summer Audubon ecology camps. We usually provide some expenses for delegates to various teacher conferences related to conservation and to such other meetings as the summer conference of the Mississippi River Basin Alliance.

Last year, under the category of donations

and fees, the Society supported the petition drive that led to voter approval of the 1/10th of 1 percent sales tax to support our state parks and soils conservation program. This summer we expect to support a membership drive in selected local zip code areas. The expense for this mailing should result in additional revenues in later years.

Following is the St. Louis Audubon itemized budget for 1997-98. If you have any questions, please call Mary Lou Miller (H# 389-3969) or Jim Holsen (H# 822-0410).

1997-98 FISCAL YEAR BUDGET

May 1, 1997 to April 30, 1998

INCOME

Item	Amount
Annual meeting	1,700
Birdathon fund raising	700
Revenue from tours	2,000
Kearney tour (spring 1998)	1,000
Donations	500
Grant (for computer hardware)	2,000
Dues income	100
Interest on CDs	650
Interest on investments	12,000
Meals & refreshments	30
Miscellaneous	150
Missouri Environmental Fund	1,000
National Audubon Society dues	14,000
University programs	200
Educational programs	60
Sales (bird seed, Eagle Days, etc.)	3,200

TOTAL INCOME

\$ 39,290

EXPENSES

Item	Amount
Administration	200
Annual meeting	1,600
Audubon Adventures (to classrooms)	500
Awards	100
Computer—CompuServe	240
Computer—hardware	2,000
Conservation activities	200
Donations & fees	1,200
Educational materials	500
Educational programs & scholarships	2,350
Equipment	250
Flowers, etc.	200
Insurance	500
Legal expenses & fees	350
Meals & refreshments	450
Meetings & conferences	2,100
Membership drive	1,500
Miscellaneous	450
Missouri Audubon Council	3,800
Mountings/skins	300
Postage—newsletter	1,400
Postage—general	500
Printing—newsletter	5,400
Printing—general	500
Rent (office)	6,500
Sales (bird seed & other)	2,500
Editor fees	1,500
Supplies	500
Telephone	1,000
Return to savings	700

TOTAL EXPENSES

\$ 39,290

Annual Dinner *from page 1*

In 1944, when the National Audubon Society began to accept local chapters, Marshall, then a member of the St. Louis Bird Club, moved that the Bird Club become an Audubon affiliate. To his surprise, he says, the motion was accepted with little debate, and St. Louis Audubon became the first of the now more than 500 local chapters of National Audubon. Marshall and his wife, Ernestine, continue to represent St. Louis Audubon at meetings of the Missouri Audubon Council and at related meetings of the Department of Conservation.

Audubon's award recipients were selected

by a committee consisting of Gary Giessow, Ed Ortleb, and Julie Wells, chairperson.

The finale for the annual dinner came from J. C. Bryant, manager of the Big Muddy National Fish and Wildlife Refuge, who discussed that newly established refuge. He received congratulations from everyone in the audience for a very, very enthusiastic presentation. The Big Muddy will consist of parcels of lands, primarily wetlands, along the Missouri River between Kansas City and St. Louis. So far, only a few initial parcels have been purchased; others are being evaluated.

Tom Day, a St. Louis Audubon board member, deserves our thanks for organizing our annual get-together. Dave Tylka, a former president, presided in the absence of current president Jim Holsen, who was ill.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Get to Know . . .

Sue Smith

Special Events

Statewide Butterfly Count — Saturdays, June 21 & September 6. No experience needed; choose from 2 different dates & 5 different locations. Call the coordinator of the site you are interested in to sign up & obtain more info.:

Busch Conservation Area in St. Charles County--Bill Brandhorst, 965-7269; **Victoria Glade** in Jefferson County--George Winkler, 993-1652; **Valley View Glades** in Jefferson County--Marshall Magner, 961-4588.

The following sites may have different count dates; please call for more info.: **Cuivre River State Park** in Lincoln County--Bruce Shuette, 314/528-7247; **Powder Valley Nature Center** in St. Louis County--Doug Jackson, 821-8427.

Operation Clean Stream — Saturday, August 23. Annual trash pickup along the Meramec River, sponsored by Open Space Council & Monsanto. St. Louis Audubon has its own stretch of river for which we are responsible. Watch for more details in August newsletter or contact Jerry Castillon, H# 391-7586.

Monsanto Eco-Fair — Saturday, September 13, at Monsanto's research facility at 700 Chesterfield Parkway North. This is the second Monsanto Eco-Fair where St. Louis Audubon will have a booth. Fair is open to the public & features representatives of local environmental organizations & businesses which support environmental & sustainability themes. For more info., call Jim Malone at 737-7190 (daytime).

(This is the seventeenth in series of articles written about and by St. Louis Audubon board members themselves so that all our membership can be better acquainted with our decision makers on the board.)

I have been interested in birds since a flock of goldfinches alighted on a tree near our campsite on the Current River in the early '70's. Although I had majored in biology in college, most of my course work had been in the areas of microbiology and genetics. I knew little about nature.

I quickly bought a bird book and began filling in this "gap" and other gaps as well. Since I was a young teacher at the time, my students had been bringing in spiders, snakes, and plants wanting to know, "What's this, Mrs. Smith?"

While living in Poplar Bluff, Missouri, I was a member of the Scenic Rivers chapter of the Audubon Society. I took students on birding trips to Mingo Wildlife Refuge and participated in Christmas bird counts and breeding bird surveys.

After moving to St. Louis in 1987, I began teaching science at Crestview Middle School in Ellisville, where I find eighth graders eager to learn about birds. We do a unit on birds in the spring and enjoy a field trip to Powder Valley Nature Center. Last week we saw lots of birds, including turkey and the male and female summer tanager.

My husband and 2 teenage daughters enjoy and treasure nature just as I do.

Being a member of Audubon has given me some voice and action in preserving our environment. Working with people of similar interests has been an enjoyable and enriching experience.

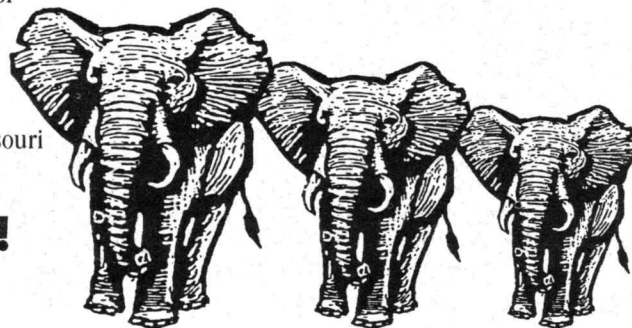
KENYA: A SAFARI ADVENTURE

AN EXCEPTIONAL WILDLIFE SAFARI CO-SPONSORED BY ST. LOUIS AUDUBON
AND THE MISSOURI BOTANICAL GARDEN
OCTOBER 19-31, 1997

- Travel to East Africa and explore Kenya, its rich culture and magnificent wildlife. Start your African safari adventure in Nairobi with options to visit the home of Karen Blixen, author of *Out of Africa*, Giraffe Manor, or Nairobi National Park.
- Then travel to the Ark, a lodge in the Aberdare Mountains. From the observation decks at the Ark view animals, including bushbuck, elephant, and Cape buffalo as they come to sample the salt lick.
- Journey further north to visit the dry scrublands in the dramatic Samburu Game Reserve. Samburu is home to animals not seen in other parts of Kenya such as the long-necked gerenuk, the tiny dik-dik, and Grevy's zebra.
- Drive through scenic Kikuyu country to overnight at Sweetwaters Tented Camp and take an evening game drive to view nocturnal animals like the aardvark and genet.
- Descend into the picturesque Great Rift Valley on the way to Lake Nakuru, a shallow alkaline lake with a wealth of birdlife, including vast flocks of flamingoes. View the magnificent acacia forest surrounding the lake, while looking for rhino and the rare Rothschild's giraffe.
- Finally, travel to the Masai Mara, the northern part of the Serengeti Plain, with its acacia-dotted grasslands and vast herds of zebra and wildebeest, lion prides, and families of elephants. Overnight in exclusive tented camps in the Mara and experience a night game drive and an escorted nature walk as well as daily game drives.
- An optional extension to Tanzania is also available.

*To request a detailed, color itinerary, call Paul Bauer at 314/921-3972, or call the Missouri Botanical Garden, Education Division, at 314/577-9506 during normal business hours.

LAST CHANCE — DON'T BE LEFT OUT!!



The Conservation Corner

Campaign Underway for Ecological Restoration of Mississippi River

by Jim Holsen

Last June the National Audubon Society voted its support for a campaign to support the ecological restoration of the upper Mississippi River. This will be 1 of several wetlands campaigns supported by the Society. We are told that it will have the same level of support as the Society's campaigns for the restoration of the Everglades in Florida, the Platte River in Nebraska, and the protection of the Tongass National Forest in Alaska.

Within the past 2 months, representatives of several Audubon groups from Minneapolis to St. Louis have met to work out objectives and priorities for the campaign. Audubon chapters in St. Louis, the Quad Cities, Dubuque, LaCrosse, and the state office in Minnesota were represented. The first meeting, held in Dubuque, Iowa, on April 10, was followed by a second meeting in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, on May 14. A third meeting will be scheduled for Rock Island, Illinois, in the latter part of June. Eric Draper, senior vice president for campaigns for National Audubon, and Ron Klataske our National Audubon regional vice president, in Manhattan, Kansas, have been participating in these discussions.

In these initial meetings, the participants have tried to identify the major environmental problems, the priority actions that are needed, and those areas in which Audubon can reasonably expect to play an important role. It is hoped that funding can be obtained and that a proposal for action can be presented to the National Audubon board of directors by early fall.

A similar campaign for the Missouri River will get underway in the near future. St. Louis Audubon, at the confluence of the 2 rivers, expects to be involved in both campaigns. Both rivers have problems, but to different degrees. The lower Missouri has been channelized; the upper Mississippi has been converted to a series of pools, behind navigational dams, that are filling in with

sediments carried down from neighboring agricultural lands.

Anyone wishing to be involved in these campaigns should contact Bill Groth at 843-7440.

Missouri Environmental Fund Making Strides

by Jim Holsen

On the address panel of this and previous newsletters, readers will notice the symbol of the State of Missouri and the slogan "Missouri Environmental Fund, Member Organization." We have not said much about the Fund, but we do expect it to contribute more and more to our income as it becomes more familiar to employers and employees.

The Fund offers employees of participating organizations the opportunity to contribute to environmental groups through periodic payroll deductions. The mechanism is exactly the same as for the more familiar United Way, which collects for a variety of charities.

The Fund, which has been in various stages of formation for several years, was finally established with officers and a board of directors not quite 2 years ago. Jerry Klamon and Laura Neuman, co-executive directors, maintain an office for the Fund, for Sustainable St. Louis, and for Earth Ways in a building on Alfred, across from the Missouri Botanical Garden. The Fund now includes 20 member organizations.

Roger Pryor of the Missouri Coalition for the Environment deserves credit for organizing the initial meetings of the founding organizations, which included St. Louis Audubon. Jim Abernathy of the Environmental Support Center in Washington, D.C. attended many of the early meetings and shared with us the experiences and problems of similar Funds in other states.

The start-up process has been difficult. Negotiations must be carried out separately with each employer in the private sector. The payroll giving campaigns of federal, state, and local governmental organizations are more open to participants such as the Fund, but still there are many obstacles in the way to becoming a fully

accredited member. Most donations in this first year have come from payroll giving campaigns in governmental organizations. The United Way has not exactly welcomed the Missouri Environmental Fund as a competitor for payroll giving.

An employee may choose to give a certain amount to the Fund itself, in which case the money is divided equally among the member organizations, or he or she may designate that his or her contribution should go to 1 or more of the member organizations.

In March, the Fund made its second round of distributions, sending checks totaling \$10,370 to its 20 member organizations. St. Louis Audubon's share was \$614.

Workplace giving campaigns last fall were very successful. Campaigns with the City of St. Louis, the Missouri State Employees Charitable Campaign, and the campaigns with federal employees in several regions of the state generated pledges totaling more than \$45,000, which will be received by the Fund over the course of the year. Pedro's Planet, a St. Louis firm specializing in recycled paper and office supplies, donated \$2,500 to the Fund, \$250 of which was designated for St. Louis Audubon.

Employers and/or employees who wish to invite the Fund into their workplaces should phone Jerry Klamon or Laura Neuman at the Fund's office, 314/771-6668.

Letter Writing Alert

According to a recent *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* article, Randy Moore, supervisor of the Mark Twain National Forest in southeast Missouri, is favoring a request by Doe Run Co. to drill for lead in an area north of the Eleven Point National Scenic River.

Environmental groups maintain that the Current, Jacks Fork and Eleven Point river basins should not be prospected or mined, based on the aesthetics and ecological sensitivity of the areas.

The Forest Service invites the public to send in written comments on the preliminary decision to allow prospecting in these areas by **June 27**. Please send your comments to:

**Mark Twain National Forest
Route 1, Box 1908
Winona, MO 65588**

ATTN: Mineral Prospecting EA

For further information, call 573/996-2153. (For a copy of the *Post-Dispatch* article on this issue and other related information, call Mary Lou Miller at 389-3969.)

Annual Meeting Produces New Officers, Board Members, and By-Laws

by Jim Holsen

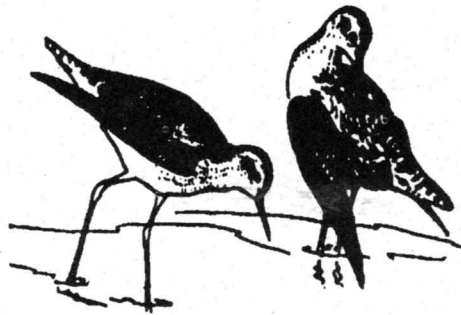
The business meeting during St. Louis Audubon's annual dinner held on April 18 was a productive one, with the election of 2 new officers, 6 new board members and new by-laws being approved by the members present.

Chris Serbia was elected vice president for education, and Bill Groth, Jr. was elected vice president for conservation. Both have been on Audubon's board of directors. Christy Beckmann, Lynne Breakstone, Jerry Castillon, Dianne Johnson, Edward Ortleb, and John Solodar were newly elected to the board. Christy Beckmann served previously as Audubon's representative to the Missouri Environmental Fund. Lynne Breakstone has helped us answer the message center phone line. Jerry Castillon returns to the board after an absence of several years, and Dianne Johnson served as our recent vice president for education. Edward Ortleb is also a board member from a number of years ago. John Solodar is an active birder who has recently retired from Monsanto. Paul Bauer chaired the nominating committee for these positions.

A listing of officers and current board members is included on the last page of every newsletter, together with a list of members who serve St. Louis Audubon in certain other ways. The efforts of many other members, not necessarily named here, contribute to our success on the local and national levels.

Members at the annual meeting also approved revisions in the Society's by-laws that are designed to allow all members to participate more easily in the organization's affairs. Voting in the annual election for officers and board members can now be accomplished by mail, with ballots included in a pre-election newsletter. The by-laws also provide for a more rigorous committee structure. The revisions will require a much greater effort on the part of present officers and board members, but should make our Society more responsive to its members.

These revisions were developed at a series of meetings of the strategic planning committee held over several months, and a copy of the revised by-laws was included as an insert in a recent newsletter. Jerry Miller led the committee in its discussions of the by-laws; Dave Tylka is leading the strategic planning process.



Spring Birding Trips Were GREAT--Hope You Were There!

By Jim Malone

April and May are always busy birding months in St. Louis, and 1997 was no exception. Unusual weather patterns this spring delayed much of the songbird migration, but we had a wonderful series of well attended walks demonstrating a number of the better birding locations in the area.

On April 5, a walk at Busch Conservation Area gave us an early preview of the migration. The songs of wintering white-throated sparrows, Carolina wrens, and juncos were now supplemented with those of chipping sparrows, northern parulas, white-eyed vireos, yellow-rumped warblers, and Louisiana waterthrushes. At the shorebird area, green- and blue-winged teal shared space on the edges of the mud with pied-billed grebes, killdeer, great blue herons, and gadwalls, while some of the season's earliest barn and tree swallows flashed by. A female oldsquaw at the shallow end of lake 33 was an unexpected treat for this time of year.

On April 12, a hardy (or is that foolhardy) group of birders braved the bone-chilling wind for the second annual woodcock/owl prowl. This year, we not only got to see and hear woodcocks peenting and flying, but Larry Wells alerted us to the presence of a common loon on lake 33.

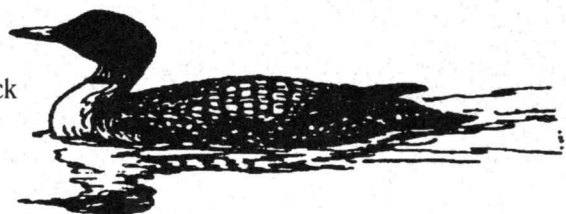
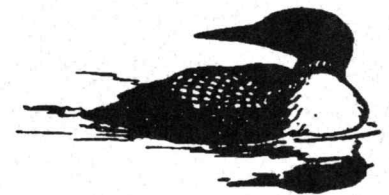
A walk at Spanish Lake on April 20 was also a rare treat. For many of us, this was our first experience of the lush forests, lakes, and lowlands, but it certainly bears repeating. The birds identified on this trip included the fish crow, brown thrasher, red-eyed vireo, blue-gray gnatcatcher, downy and hairy woodpeckers, summer tanager, and broad-winged hawk. We were also fortunate to see a family of great-horned owls shortly after the young owls first left the nest.

On April 26, we went south to Mingo National Wildlife Refuge, Duck Creek, and Otter Slough Conservation Area in the Missouri Bootheel.

An enthusiastic group of over 30 adventurers spent Saturday and Sunday there, running up a total bird count of 108 species. Some trip-highlight birds at Mingo and Duck Creek included a very cooperative yellow-crowned night heron along the road, ruby-throated hummingbirds, pileated woodpeckers, sora rail, Mississippi kite, bald eagles, marsh wren, yellowlegs, yellow-throated vireos, prothonotary warblers, yellow warblers, and both water-thrushes. At Otter Slough, the green-winged teal, long-billed dowitcher, Wilson's phalarope, black-necked stilt, great-crested flycatcher, and loggerhead shrike were added to the trip list.

The combination of nice weather, the promise of good birds, and newly restored hiking paths made the 2 traditional International Migratory Bird Week Forest Park walks something special this year. Each trip was attended by over 60 people, who were treated to great looks at a number of warblers (including hooded, blue-winged, golden-winged, Tennessee, Nashville, black and white, common yellowthroat, orange crowned, Louisiana waterthrush, black-throated green, palm, cerulean, northern parula, blackpoll, Blackburnian, American redstart, Kentucky, and chestnut-sided), a variety of thrushes (including Swainson's, grey-cheeked, eastern bluebirds, and wood thrushes), and several vireos (warbling, red-eyed, white-eyed, yellow-throated, and solitary). At one point, several of us were able to see a brilliant crimson summer tanager on the right side of the same tree where a flashy orange and black Baltimore oriole dominated the left side. Some other birds of note from these walks included ruby-throated hummingbirds, olive-sided flycatcher, and a pair of barred owls in plain view at a turn in the path.

Continued on page 8



The Education Corner

Education Committee to be Formed

by Chris Serbia

This year we are forming an education committee to review our existing education materials and to formulate new ideas on how to best educate the public, particularly children, about our natural world. If you would be interested in giving a few hours a month, please call Jim Holsen (H# 822-0410).

Thanks to . . .

The following St. Louis Auduboners who helped at the Biodiversity Celebration at the Missouri Botanical Gardens on April 5:

Dick Boeneker
Anita Brandmeier
Stan McLean
Mary Lou Miller
Chris Serbia
Linda Virga

Auduboners Assist with Wings of Spring

by Mary Smith

The Audubon booth was in attendance at Wings of Spring at Riverlands in West Alton. The Corps of Engineers hosted this event on April 13. Many organizations were at the fair, which was intended to educate people about the importance of river and wetland conservation and the animals that inhabit these areas.

In addition to the informational booths, World Bird Sanctuary gave live bird programs, tours of the Lock and Dam were given throughout the day, and electrofishing demonstrations showed how fish populations are monitored.

Thanks to **Linda Horn** and **Arthur Montgomery** who helped me at our booth. The knowledge they shared and their friendliness towards our visitors demonstrate the dedication of St. Louis Audubon to our community and its resources.

Bird Discovery Day Celebrated at the Zoo

by Mary Lou Miller

On Saturday, May 10, as part of International Migratory Bird Day (IMBD), volunteers and staff from the St. Louis Zoo and volunteers from the St. Louis Audubon Society joined together to present Bird Discovery Day at the St. Louis Zoo. It was a fun day, and we talked to lots of people. The kids, in particular, seemed to enjoy the activities planned for them.

Our activities and information tables were set up in the rotunda of the Living World building on the lower level. Promotion this year was better than last year, with articles in many different publications and on the radio. We had special bird activities for kids on 2 different tables. Dianne Johnson, Chris Serbia, and Becky Warren planned and carried out these activities with help from some of Dianne's students.

Another table emphasizing raptors was manned by Michael Abbene. Michael drew large numbers of people to his table. I even learned something new when Michael dissected an owl pellet.

Mary Dueren, Sue Jones, and Bill Salsgiver were kept busy explaining how to identify birds using bird skins from Tyson Research Center, our own bird mounts, and field guides. They also showed people where to go birding on our large AAA map and used the excellent publications we now have on this subject. Outdoor Maps from the Missouri Department of Conservation were given out to those from Missouri.

Betty Miller divided her time between the main Audubon table and the "where to go" birding display. Also at our main table were Joan Grahlf, Stan McLean, and me. We handed out posters and talked to people about the event. We also took in some new memberships.

Ron Darling, Jerry Miller, and Dale Ponce helped those interested in bird seed, bird houses, and bird feeders. They had 2 tables with everything from suet feeders to gourd houses on display. Hundreds of bird house plans were given out. Two volunteers from Wild Bird Rehabilitation had a table to explain how

to care and feed injured or displaced wild birds.

Louise Bradshaw and Sara Lenoe of the St. Louis Zoo staff, and also St. Louis Audubon Society members, were our liaisons with the St. Louis Zoo in the planning and implementing of our activities. A big thank you to them for their efforts and helpfulness in this project. Thanks to Charlie Hoessle for allowing St. Louis Audubon to be at the Zoo and work closely with Zoo personnel on these activities.

Trish Abbene and other docents from the St. Louis Zoo displayed live birds all day. Getting acquainted with these birds was a very popular activity by the public. The docents also manned a bird cart with all sorts of interesting articles regarding birds on it.

It is hoped that more people in our area and other states now realize how many lovely and interesting migrant birds come through our area in the spring and just how far these birds have to travel to rest and nest. Other activities were held in the area during this week to make many more people aware of these special migratory birds. Thanks to those who handled the birding trips during this time, including **Paul Bauer** and **Jim Malone**. All these activities helped promote an interest in birds and bird habitat and their preservation.

In addition to these birding activities, the North American Migratory Bird Count was taking place in counties in our area. Many more Audubon members helped with this event.

Thanks again to those who helped with Bird Discovery Day at the Zoo:

Michael Abbene
Trish Abbene
Louise Bradshaw & Zoo docents
Ron Darling
Mary Dueren
Joan Grahlf
Dianne Johnson
Sue Jones
Sue Lenoe & Zoo volunteers
Stan McLean
Betty Miller
Jerry Miller
Mary Lou Miller
Dale Ponce
Bill Salsgiver
Chris Serbia
Becky Warren
Wild Bird Rehab. Volunteers

Thank you also to those who came early or stayed late to help set up and take down and return all the items to our Kirkwood office.

Researching the Humboldt Penguins

by Sara Lenoe

(Last fall, Sara Lenoe, a bird keeper at the St. Louis Zoo and a St. Louis Audubon board member, volunteered for a 2-week research program directed by the Milwaukee Zoo.)

Clambering over boulders at a Chilean island's edge, I finally caught sight of what I'd been imagining for months: a Humboldt penguin fresh out of the surf and stretched up tall, watching me warily. I thrashed around a bit too excitedly, trying to get my binoculars up, and the penguin whirled back into the water. I was to spend the next 2 weeks wedging myself partway down penguin burrows and getting up-close views of the occupants. It was the end of October 1996, and I was a volunteer field assistant for a Humboldt penguin research project initiated by the Milwaukee Zoo.

I've been a bird keeper at the St. Louis Zoo for 6 years, working with penguins for the bulk of that time. The Humboldt penguins in the Zoo's collection interested me in particular. Watching them rocket around their pool and shoot out of the water, I wished to see their wild counterparts in action at sea.

Humboldts (*Spheniscus humboldti*) are native to the west coast of South America and are among the most endangered species of penguins. Currently, their numbers are estimated at about 13,000. Humboldts are also among the least studied penguins in the wild. Threats to the species include damage to breeding colonies by human activity, competi-

tion from the commercial fishing industry for the fish the penguins feed upon, and the drowning of adult birds in fishing nets. In addition to the human pressures, the birds periodically face El Nino; with that change in the ocean currents, fish disappear and penguin populations plummet.

When I boarded the plane in St. Louis, the temperature was hovering in the 30's (F). When we arrived in Santiago, Chile, it was spring time, with temperatures mostly in the 60's. Some people are surprised to learn that certain penguin species thrive in temperate climates like this. (In fact, Humboldts are so cold-sensitive that during the coldest months of the St. Louis winter, the captive Humboldts must be locked indoors to prevent them from getting frostbite!) One way that penguins have adapted to nesting in warmer areas is by digging burrows to lay their eggs in. Here the birds are sheltered from the hot sun. Humboldts will also nest in small natural caves and between boulders.

Possibly as many as 3,000 Humboldts make use of this Chilean island. By the time I arrived, most of the penguins had laid eggs (usually a female lays 2 eggs at a time), and some of the eggs were beginning to hatch.

Part of my job was to check nests. The project team had previously marked around 800 birds with either flipper bands or small transponder chips placed under the skin.

During nest checks, once we had identified the adult in the burrow, the next step was checking for eggs and for chicks. This step required a flashlight and a long pole to lift the penguin slightly to see what was beneath it. We also had to be very careful to keep our hands out of bite range as Humboldts have a very sharp bill.

If chicks were present, we usually weighed them as the researchers were gathering information on chick growth rates. We carefully removed the chicks and weighed them on a small portable scale. The whole process normally took just a couple of minutes, and the adults always accepted the chicks back immediately.

Though I strongly suspect the Humboldts didn't enjoy my stay on their island, I did feel that the research team tried hard to keep disturbances of the birds to a minimum. I came away from the island feeling blessed with a vivid stock of penguin memories and wanting more than ever to convey to others what we'd be losing if the Humboldts go.

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To contact the St. Louis Audubon Society, please call 314/822-6595.

Spring Birding Trips *from page 5*

Our last walk of the season was on May 24 at Shaw Arboretum in Gray Summit. A stroll around the Manor house gave us great looks at a striking male common yellowthroat, chipping sparrows, indigo buntings, Blackburnian warbler, ruby-throated hummingbird, and a number of eastern bluebirds. On the way to the trail house, we heard Louisiana waterthrushes and saw an Acadian flycatcher in the heavy woods. During lunch at the trail house, eastern phoebes flew in and out of the rafters of the picnic area. Blue-winged warblers were vocalizing throughout the woods, and we finally got good looks at them at the edge of the forest, where they appeared with Kentucky and prairie warblers. Although we were unable to locate Henslow's sparrows or sedge wrens on this trip, the day was very pleasant overall.

As we have taken the last scheduled bird walk on the 1996-97 St. Louis Audubon calendar, I want to thank all of you who came on the walks this year and helped us find and identify a wonderful range of birds. I extend a very special thanks to **Francis Bauer** and **Charlene Malone** who didn't really volunteer to lead any of the walks, but both took up the task with great skill and patience when it was thrust upon them.

Keep an eye on the August newsletter for the next season's schedule of birding trips--we hope to see you then!

Newsletter Information

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Please send any article submissions for the next edition by **August 1, 1997** to Karen Tylka, 3155 Frisco Hill Rd., Imperial, MO 63052 (H# 942-3142).



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